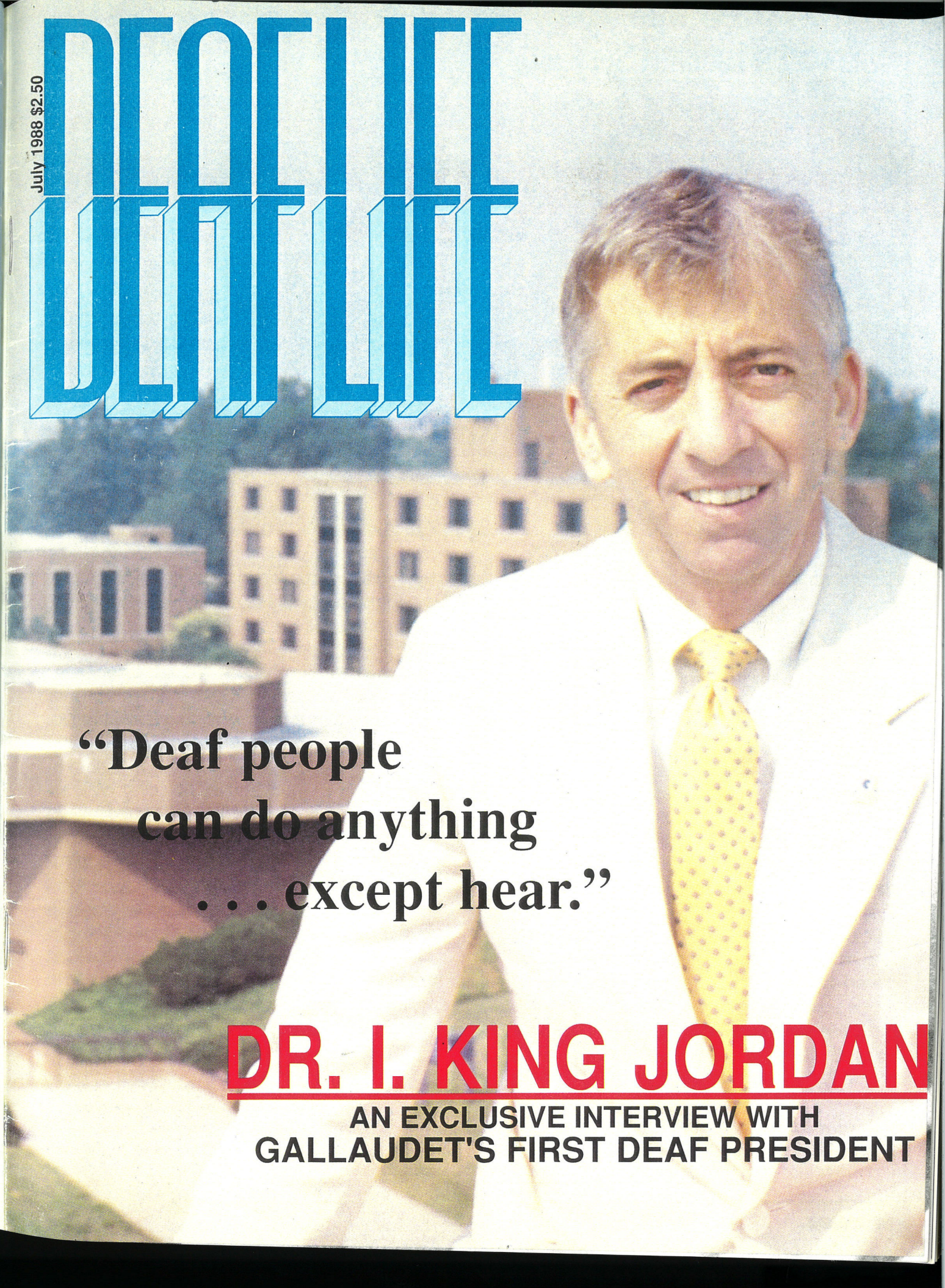
July 1988 $2.50

DEAF LIFE

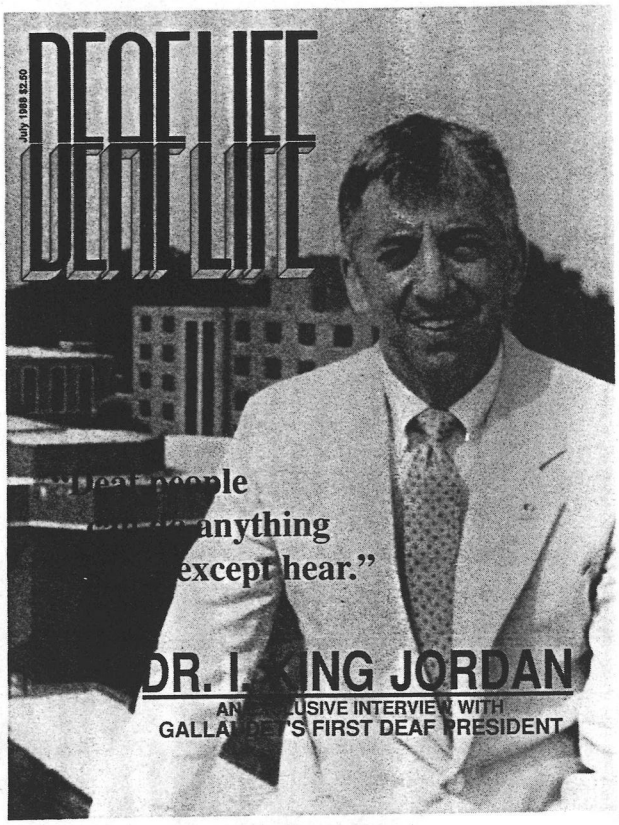


"Deaf people can do anything . . . except hear."

DR. I. KING JORDAN

AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH GALLAUDET'S FIRST DEAF PRESIDENT

VOLUME I, NUMBER 1 JULY 1988



COVER

PHOTO BY JENNIFER BAKER

Gallaudet University, the world's first liberal arts college for Deaf students, was founded 124 years ago, but never had a Deaf president until this past March, when Dr. I. King Jordan, Dean of the College of Arts and Science, was appointed to the post. It was an historic occasion whose importance was appreciated by both Deaf and Hearing people around the world. It showed that the Deaf community has come of age and is ready, more than ready, to begin taking charge of its own affairs and directing its own destiny. It showed (in case anybody needed to be shown) that there are capable and talented Deaf people ready to serve as leaders and movers.

We are pleased to present an exclusive interview with Dr. Jordan, who talks about his feelings and experiences since becoming president of Gallaudet. 14

HELLO

It is with great pleasure that I'm finally able to announce the beginning of regular monthly publication for **DEAF LIFE**. My deepest thanks to our readers for your interest, support, and patience. We received many enthusiastic letters from people who enjoyed the trial issue of **DEAF LIFE** and wanted to buy extra copies for their friends or relatives, or simply share the magazine with them. I was very touched by all these letters. Although we have room for only a small sampling, I'd like to thank all our correspondents for sharing their thoughts, suggestions, and criticisms with us.

As you can see, we've made a major change from the trial issue: there is a lot less color. Not having as many subscribers as we'd hoped for meant some sacrifices, and we felt that the most important thing was to start publishing as soon as we could, even if it meant a mostly black-and-white magazine. Our commitment to quality has not changed, however. We *will* continue to improve **DEAF LIFE**'s coverage and features. And just as soon as we build up our subscription lists, we'll gradually re-introduce color. That's a promise.

As D. A. Frank says in his letter (see page 5), "It's really about time for us Deaf people to have our *own* magazine." Yes indeed! Keep in mind that this is *our* magazine, yours and mine, and feel free to share your views with me. Thanks again for your support.

Matthew S. Moore

Matthew S. Moore
Publisher

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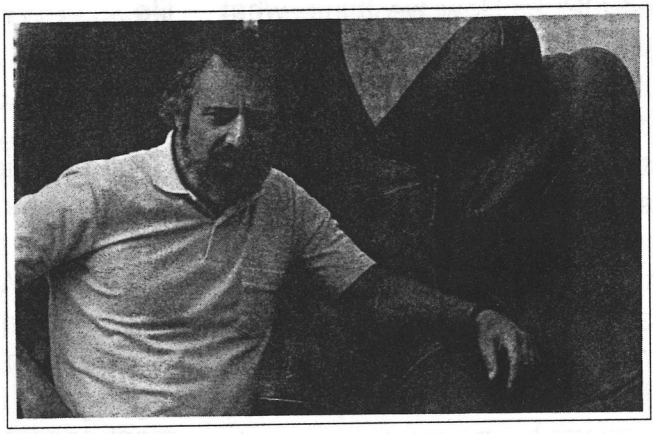

■ Sculptor Sam Gendusa co-ordinated a different kind of "hands-on" public sculpture project—a monumental pair of hands that communicate the ASL concept of "friendship," were constructed with the enthusiastic participation of Oregon Deaf schoolchildren, and were designed to encourage viewers to touch or even curl up in them. **10**

DOES ASL HAVE A PLACE IN EDUCATION FOR THE DEAF?

■ Our Trial Issue featured an article by C. Tane Akamatsu and Wilma Rose Santiago on the controversy surrounding the role of American Sign Language in Deaf education. In this issue we reprint the original article, together with the responses we've received from our readers. **20**

■ Julius and Harriet Wiggins came back from a 1968 vacation trip with a dream: to start a newspaper for Deaf people. This year, **Silent News** celebrates its 20th anniversary. **25**

Seasons Greetings and All the Best for 1969

THE SILENT PRESS, INC. NEW YORK, NEW YORK

SILENT NEWS

★ WHERE ★ WHAT ★ WHEN ★

VOL. 1, NO. 1. JANUARY 1, 1969 COPY 15 cents

SILENT NEWS IS BORN

Our Newspaper Welcomes You

The Editor and Staff Will Have Plans for News about Social Events

Sports Editor Will Write News About Sports

Bilingual Santa Knows Sign Talk Of Deaf Children

****

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DEAF LIFE

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LETTERS

Trial Issue

I think that this new magazine is wonderful and I hope you will continue the publishing.

Rita Spencer,
Frederick, MD

Congratulations on a terrific start from all of us at **Deaf Mosaic**. Gil Eastman shared a copy with us at a production meeting and we are eagerly awaiting #2!

Marin P. Allen, Ph.D.
Washington, DC

Wish magazine was to be published sooner. Great "Trial Issue"! Enjoyed from cover to cover . . .

Mr. & Mrs. Thom
Woodburn, OR

Trial issue magazine is covered with fantastic designs and it is good magazine for all hearing impaired and hearing people to read about our deafness—**WOW!**

Jay Shophire
VA Beach, VA

One: The story on the TV station in Boston was interesting. But it was NOT correct. They were NOT the first to close-caption the news. A station in Kansas City, Missouri was the FIRST. I think it was station 5. They have been closed-captioning the news for 6 or 7 years now.

Two: There was TOO MUCH about NTD in the issue. It was interesting BUT . . . I mean almost one-half of the issue?????? Three: I really basically felt ripped off. I was expecting a magazine about DEAF PEOPLE. How we think, what we are doing, how we feel about things, how to cope with *** hearing people, etc. I am considering going for a one-year subscription, but I would like to receive some assurance that the magazine will be more about DEAF PEOPLE.

Bobbie Fallon
Rochester, NY

My brother lost his hearing three years ago, at the age of 38. He had a high fever; between the fever and antibiotics the nerves in the ears were burnt out. He is having a very difficult time adjusting/accepting to his deafness and seems to be consumed in self-pity. I have taken a course in sign language and read as much about the deaf as I can find. I also subscribed to a magazine called "Shhhh" —my brother said the magazine is not helpful or of interest to him because it is written mostly for people who are hard of hearing and not deaf. He will not learn sign language. He said he is too old to learn; so my signing or finger spelling doesn't help. I read the article that appeared in our local paper concerning you and your magazine. I was inspired once again to help my brother—as I pass the article along to my brother I pray the article and magazine will touch him in a special way. Perhaps through reading your magazine my brother will finally accept his deafness and try to begin a new life.

Judith Marchman,
Wilmington, DE

Congratulations are due your for your initiation of a new magazine for the profoundly hearing impaired. We need emphasis on achievement and on the sort of "deafism" that closes so many doors to us, both employment and social. Go get 'em! I have been an officer and active in Oral Hearing Impaired, Internat'l, a subdivision of the Alexander Graham Bell Association of the Hearing Impaired, as they are now called. We are trying to eliminate the word "Deaf" from common usage, since it signifies major inferiority, something we don't need! As a suggestion for coming issues, I think you would find a monthly story on those who have won honorary PhD's from Gallaudet or other major colleges and, also, those who have earned a doctorate in the usual manner. The kids need role models and the general public needs to have its eyes opened.

Joe Thom
Woodburn, OR

As a hearing-impaired teacher of the deaf, I read with great interest about your idea for a new magazine for and about

LETTERS

the deaf. I feel it is a magazine which is long overdue.

Greg Murphy
Vancouver, WA

I am glad to learn of Mr. Moore's venture and see no reason why his goal of 50,000 new subscribers cannot be achieved.

Florence May
Elmira, NY

I got a magazine from you last month. I read it and really love this better than Silent News. I work as mailhander at US Postal Service in Cincinnati, Ohio eight years now. I work as Mail Processing Machine operator (Mark II's). I work as a volunteer and officer of Kentucky Association of the Deaf.

Ron Sperry

As a hearing woman who worked for several years with hearing-impaired people, I salute your efforts in founding this magazine.

Kristi Michene
Madera, CA

Upon reading the trial issue of your magazine **DEAF LIFE**, I congratulate you on your efforts to bring forth a new magazine for our reading. May the best of luck come your way with this magazine venture.

S. Kay Vincent
DCARA Bookstore Manager
San Leandro, CA

"**DEAF LIFE**' has a potential to be the great magazine that people with hearing impaired can relate to and be proud. Format is good because of pictures and photographs. Keep it up!

Hande J. Forcht
Librarian
Vancouver, WA

DEAF LIFE is impressive! As President of the Friends of Libraries for Deaf Action (FOLDA), I have made a point of showing it to several of my colleagues. I also brought it with me to the American Library Association's recent annual convention in San Francisco and showed it to a number of people there. Reactions everywhere have been most favorable!

Alice Hagemeyer
Librarian for the
Deaf Community
Washington D.C.

It is a fantastic start, highly professional in layout and your stated format emphasizing photo-journalism is certainly right on target if your initial issue is any indicator! Congratulations on your efforts and we look forward with anticipation to receiving each future issue.

Hollis W. Wyks
Superintendent
The Boston School
Randolph, MA

I want to thank you for making my Christmas shopping easier. I think your magazine is the perfect gift for "the man who has everything."

Darlene Teasley

Thanks for sending me the trial issue, which I enjoyed reading. It's really about time for us deaf people to have our "own" magazine and I hope it'll continue to exist for a long period of time. I've showed this issue to a number of deaf people not only to hear what they think of it, but also to spread the word that there is a new magazine for deaf people. They were really pleased to see it—they didn't really give an opinion on it—they were just glad to see that there is a magazine for deaf people.

D. A. Frank

Kudos to "**DEAF LIFE**". Love the idea and the way it is carried out. Problem- are you going to translate ASL into English or only transliterate? Unless you are willing to translate into good English you will appear illiterate to your hearing audience. It would seem that a note of policy (like you have on pg. 27) that all [quotes] are **translated** from ASL or PSE would honor the speaker—or put " " in italics when it has been **translated** rather than just transcribed.

Bev Schmidt
Piedmont, CA.

LETTERS

Debbie Rennie

I read the trial isse of **DEAF LIFE** from cover to cover, but especially enjoyed "Debbie Rennie: Women of a Thousand Faces." I was Debbie's first teacher in the day class program here in Erie. I am so pleased with her success as "Zalomi" as I am pleased with the accomplishments of any and all of the students I have taught. When Debbie performed in Erie last fall she (in her act) did an imitation of me that brought the house down. I laughed until I cried. I felt truly loved by a former student. Thank you for featuring Debbie in your premiere issue.

Lorretta R. Baron,
Erie, PA

NTD

It was great fun to read about all the "others" twenty years later. The whole magazine was of great interest and very well designed and professional. Good luck with it. I hope it finds the readership it deserves.

Joyce Lasko

Re: your request for the whereabouts of NTD's Howard Palmer and Ralph White. Palmer is still affiliated with the Mississippi School for the Deaf in Jackson, MS. White is the superintendent of the Oklahoma School for the Deaf at Sulphur, OK.

Ed Scouten
Fairport, NY

Action 7

This magazine LOOKS wonderful. Photos, layout, colors, graphics—all splendid. I am hearing—and a friend of Debbie Rennie. That's how I got the magazine. I've been slowly learning to sign. I sign a few of my stories and try to have interpreters at many of any public performances. I'd love more articles about other deaf artists, performers. Is it possible to do a photo presentation of an ASL poem? I should think so. I would love to see poetry included on a regular basis—in photo-captioned sign. Of course, it wouldn't be the same as live—but probably closer than the English translations. And whereas I'd LOVE to go to Rochester's deaf poetry series— It's far! Away. I have one teeeensi tiny criticism—the cover logo "**DEAF LIFE**" is difficult to read. For me anyhow. It makes it hard for people unfamiliar with a new magazine to IMMEDIATELY recognize what its about, and I am afraid it might get passed over by some people who might be interested.

Louise Kessel
Bynum, NC

SEND LETTERS TO:

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TALK IS BETTER FOR YOUR KIDS THAN DRUGS...

SO TALK!

For information on what to say and how to say it, write me, McGruff, P.O. Box 471, Washington, D.C. 20044.

TAKE A BITE OUT OF CRIME

Ad Council

A message from the Crime Prevention Coalition and the Ad Council.
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ENTERTAINMENT BOOK REVIEWS

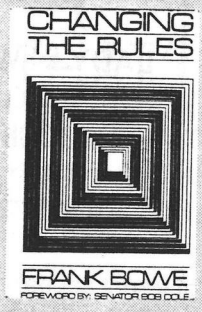
OUT FROM THE GLASS BOX: "Deafness," observes Dr. Frank Bowe in his new autobiography, "means being alone," imprisoned in "a glass box." And: "My family raised me to live a life driven by dreams." These two themes provide the key to Bowe's accomplishments as an outstanding Deaf activist in the civil rights for the disabled movement which spearheaded enactment of section 504 into law. His story in the triumph-over-adversities genre is enjoyable and good-humored; its greatest charm is the evocation of growing up Deaf in postwar Pennsylvania—the first televisions, Joe McCarthy, Sputnik, Little League, and endless frustration. There are vivid sketches of Bowe's extraordinarily patient, literate mother and his vigorously athletic, no-nonsense father. Determined to give their son a normal, secure childhood, they were nonetheless at the mercy of doctors and educators who, in line with their times, had already rejected Signing as a means of communication. We see the mischievous, questioning little boy grow into a nervous, bewildered, and lonely child, forced to compete against Hearing classmates, who ultimately becomes a self-assured educator and leader: a person whose life has made a difference. A cheering message, and a good book to curl up with on a gloomy day.

SIGNING

Elaine Costello's **Signing: How to Speak With Your Hands** (New York: Bantam, 1983) is an attractive large-format paperback Sign dictionary and introduction to ASL. It is nicely designed—six Signs per page, each Sign illustrated with a clear, easily-read drawing. 1,200 signs are included, organized not alphabetically but by concept—for example, "The Basics," "Things," "Times, Days, and Seasons," "Being and Feeling." This conceptual arrangement encourages browsing through, and thus absorbing, the Signs. There are many useful features (like memorization hints for initialized and iconic Signs) that make this a handy basics or reference tool—a thoughtful gift for a Hearing (or Deaf) friend who is just beginning to learn Signing. Or an addition to your own ASL resources.

CHANGING THE RULES

Frank Bowe's **Changing the Rules** (Silver Spring: T. J. Publishers, 1986) is the engaging autobiography of a leading Deaf activist and educator. The "rules" are those laws and societal attitudes which affect *all* Deaf Americans. Until recently, they were forced to play by the old rules, which meant a very unfair "game" with no guaranteed rights, as Dr. Bowe's own story reveals. Growing up in a postwar "mainstreamed" environment (*no* Signing), the lonely and frustrated Deaf child became, nonetheless, a leader determined to share his own advantages with others still trapped in their own glass boxes of isolation. Dr. Bowe helped push the enactrment of section 504, the bill of rights for the disabled, into law (in 1977), thus getting "rules of the game" changed—for the better.



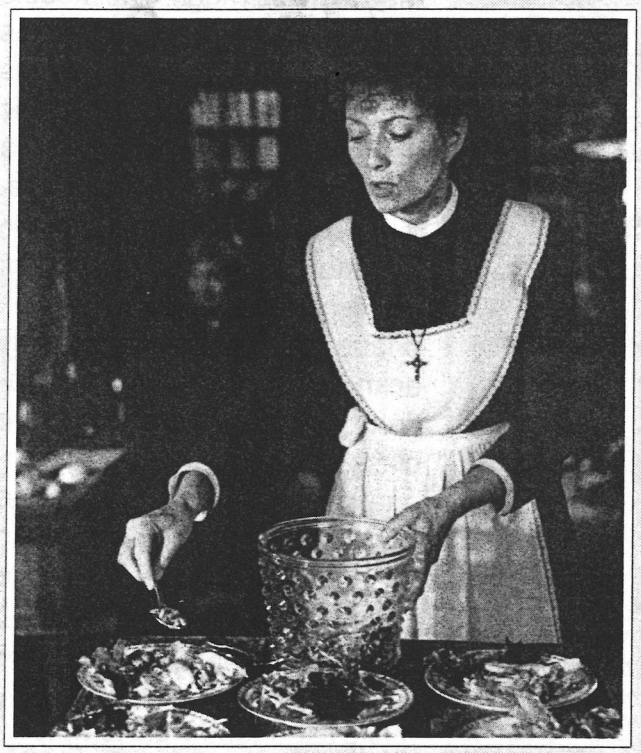
ENCOURAGING SIGNS: Elaine Costello's *Signing* is an attractively designed introduction to ASL. The 1,200 included signs are arranged conceptually, which encourages browsing. And this dictionary is a pleasure to browse through. It is clearly and crisply designed; each page features six easy-to-read sign drawings. The models are a refreshing mix of races and ages. There are useful hints (noting initialization or the iconic derivation of many signs), a good cultural-historical preface, a glossary of communication terminology, and a readings list; English glosses are listed alphabetically. This book sensibly acknowledges its own limitations. No text, no videotape, no class can substitute for one-to-one practice in ASL, but the appearance of such a book in the mass market is a positive indication of ASL's growing popularity. Aside from its value as a reference tool, it would make a thoughtful gift to a Hearing friend or relative, or a Deaf person whose fluency in Sign is still rudimentary.

BY LINDA LEVITAN

ENTERTAINMENT
MOVIE REVIEWS

BABETTE'S FEAST

Based on a story by Isak Dinesen (author of *Out of Africa*), this film tells the story of two sisters who each have sweethearts but choose never to marry, instead remaining with their father, a strict Lutheran minister in a tiny 19th-century Danish fishing village. Even after the minister dies, the two sisters remain together, taking care of their small group of old church-members. One stormy night in 1871, a strange Frenchwoman named Babette Hersant arrives at the sisters' house with a letter from one sister's former singing teacher, asking them to accept Babette as a cook. They accept her, and she works for them, unpaid, for 14 years. When she wins 10,000 francs in a lottery, she asks the sisters to let cook a special French dinner to celebrate their father's 100th birthday.



A must-see! This delightful movie will take you into another world and another time. Not much action, but it's a visual feast, with the relationship between the sisters, the villagers, and Babette played against the rocky, windy, yet beautiful Jutland coast. There's not much talking either, but a lot is communicated through a glance or an expression. The acting is wonderful. This is a film to relax with, to enjoy at a slow, quiet pace. But make sure you have something to eat beforehand, or else you'll become *very* hungry while watching it.

BY MATTHEW S. MOORE

AMERICAN FILMS

LADY IN WHITE	★★
POLTERGEIST III	★★★
RAMBO III	★★
WILLOW	★★★

Our rating system is based on the ratio of visual appeal and action to "talkiness." ★★★★★: "Wow!" Lots of action, beautiful visuals. Don't miss it. ★★★★: Really good, but there's *some* talking. ★★★: Half action, half talking. ★★: More talking than action. *Might* be worth seeing. ★: Mostly talk. Don't bother.

FOR HEARING PEOPLE ONLY

ASL: What is it?

ASL really owes nothing to English, and often surpasses English for versatility and subtlety.

ASL possesses regional variations, slang, fad expressions, wordplay, puns, and plenty of humor.

ASL lends itself to theatre, poetry, Sign Mime, and storytelling. .

ASL is the third most widely-used foreign language in the U.S. (after Spanish and Italian).

American Sign Language (also called Ameslan or ASL) is not "bad English," "broken English," "short English," or any kind of English. Nor is it Morse Code, or fingerspelling, or pantomime. ASL is a unique language with its own grammatical rules and syntax (sentence structure), and is every bit as versatile and subtle as English. In some ways, it's even more so.

Many ASL signs were borrowed from Old French Sign Language, but some have always been "American." ASL, however, has developed quite independently of English. Its structure owes nothing to English. Just like any other modern, living and ever-changing language, ASL continues to evolve. New signs are gradually introduced, old signs are altered or dropped. ASL possesses regional variations, slang, and fad expressions. There are also puns, wordplay, and plenty of humor.

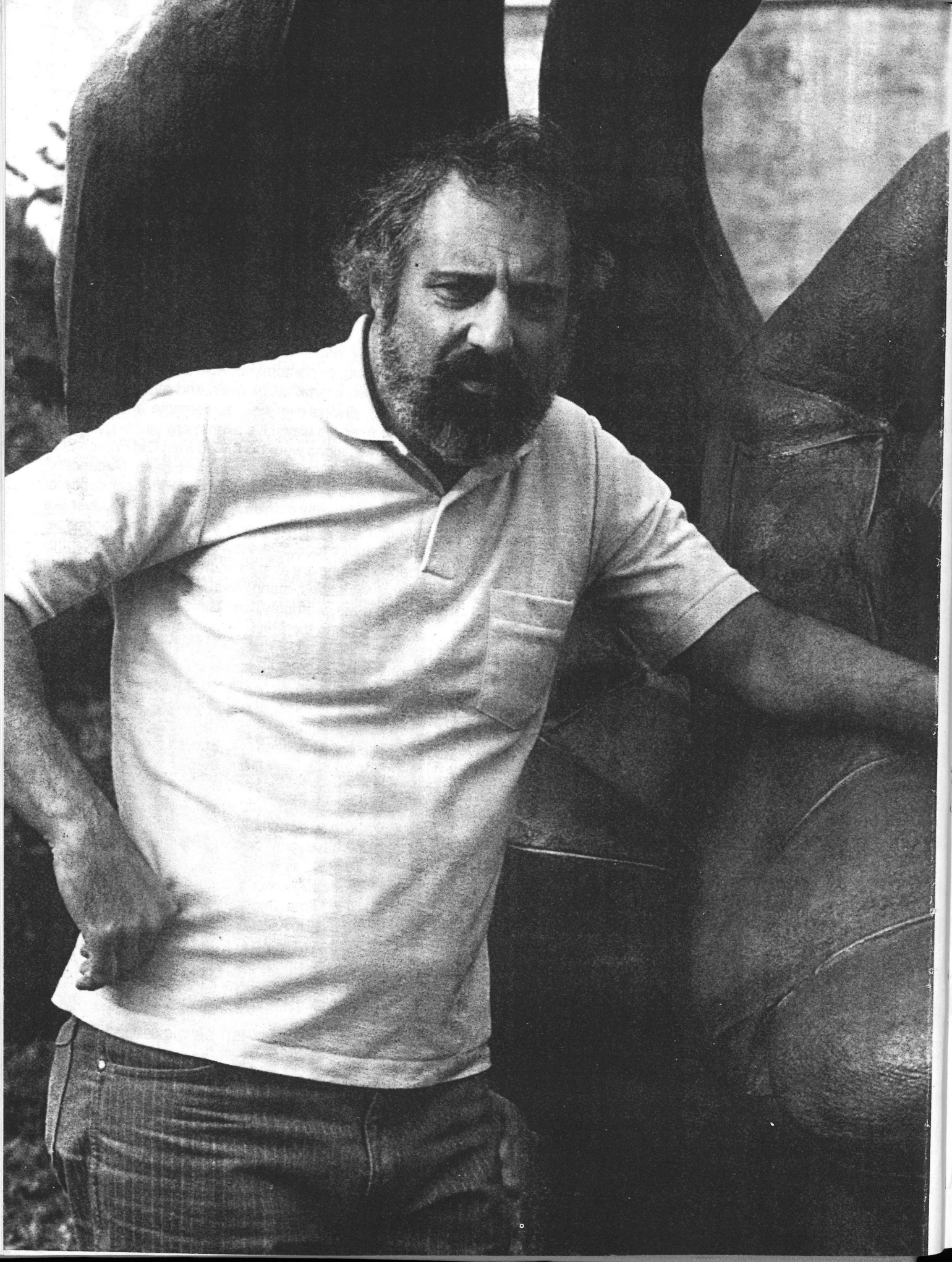
ASL has been the precious heritage of the Deaf community, whose users have nonetheless suffered from widespread prejudice in the Hearing world. Not so long ago, Deaf children were discouraged from using ASL even in Deaf schools, and adults were ashamed to be seen Signing in public. Why? They were made to feel that ASL was somehow inferior to English, and communicating in Sign was 'animal-like.' Happily, we've made progress against such destructive, ignorant attitudes, but sentiment against ASL still exists, and Deaf children still are discouraged from making ASL their first language.

Linguists have only recently begun to pay serious attention to ASL as a language, but ASL has already begun to enrich American culture through theatre, poetry, and Sign Mime, and storytelling. Even to those who don't understand it, ASL can be very exciting to watch. Its popularity is steadily increasing, and it's now the fourth most widely-used language in the United States. ASL is a beautiful and expressive language which is finally beginning to get the respect it deserves.

Have a question about Deaf people and their culture?...Write to: "For Hearing People Only," c/o DEAF LIFE, Box 63083 Marketplace Mall, Rochester, NY 14623-6383.

DO YOU KNOW THAT?

- people using ASL can communicate comfortably with each other across a football field—much farther than the loudest shout can carry!?
- Sign Language is so handy it's used in underwater communication?
- while whispering can be picked up by microscopic "bugging" devices, Sign Language is bugproof? (CIA, take notice!)
- gorillas and chimpanzees have been taught how to communicate in ASL? (The gorilla Koko has become quite fluent!)



HANDS

IENDSHIP IN SALEM, OREGON

Other schools have signs to proclaim their identities. But here at the Oregon State School for the Deaf, our hands are our tongues, so we thought that the identifying sign should be visual: it should symbolize our means of communication—our hands—to proclaim who we are.

With this in mind, we decided to create an appropriate sculpture. Our result does not depict 'a pair of hands' but an adaptation of the sign for 'friendship' in American Sign Language. The exact hand sign for 'friendship' would be difficult to execute sculpturally, so we modified the image. Most Hearing persons understood our image to be "interlocking forms"—a symbol of friendship, or at least the beginning of friendship, something like a handshake in reverse. Thus the idea of interlocking forms or hands became our own "sign" for the school.

Until fairly recently, it was not considered "polite" to sign in public. Now we've come full circle from that prejudiced attitude—we're using a hand-sign to "officially" represent a State educational institution! (Another version, 8 feet high, was donated to the city by the Deaf students and placed in the garden of an historic site—Boon's Treasury—in Salem, Oregon.)

How does a Hearing sculptor build a large outdoor sculpture with a crew of Deaf students? First, he rounds up an interpreter: in this case, John Roy Wilson, a teacher of Art and Drama at the Oregon State School for the Deaf. With his help, we designed, constructed, and installed the 6-foot sculpture—a sculpture created by and for the students who live at the school throughout the year. Participation was paramount. Even though we had a crew of 7 students doing most of the work, over 50 students from 4th through 12th grades pitched in.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF SAM GENDUSA

OUR HANDS ARE OUR TONGUES

Planning:

First I made a drawing of the idea test its feasibility as sculpture. Once I was sure it might work, I made a scale model (one inch to one foot) in clay, then a series of working drawings for the interior framework and mounting systems. These, along with a list of materials and estimate of total cost, were submitted to school officials for consideration. We were able to use a special fund set up for this purpose. Once our plans were approved, we began recruiting students for the construction crew.

Materials:

Instead of traditional materials likel wood, stone, or bronze, we chose reinforced concrete. And because of a time limitation, we opted for the direct method of construction. In this, no molds or forms are used; instead, the sculpture is built directly, rather like a hand-molded sandcastle. This method allowed us to finish the sculpture in half the time and using a third of the materials it would otherwise take to cast it.

Procedure:

We started with a 1/2" steel plate and reinforcing bar ("rebar") and metal screen (lath) framework which was arc-welded together. Cement mortar and sand were measured and mixed dry in a wheelbarrow. Water was then added to make a mortar with a mud-like consistency. Layer upon layer was built up this way, scraped smooth, and carved. Cement carves like plaster when it's one day old, like marble at three days, and like granite at a week. The final layer was brushed with a non-fading iron-oxide pigment.

Participation:

The initial mortaring was done by 4th and 5th graders. Ignoring the trowels and protective gloves we had provided, they grabbed the wet mortar and slopped it right on, mudpie-style. The older students finished it off. Not only did we incorporate students into the actual construction process, we also eliminated the pedestal, thereby encouraging the audience to interact with the sculpture by coming close, touching, or even sitting in it. We wanted a public scupture that would include its public within its creative context.

Installation:

For the base, we chose a large tree stump and prepared it for installation day. The completed 2500-pound sculpture was mounted on a sturdy wooden "cart" and, with long ropes, tugged a quarter-mile to its site. Our trusty student crew helped. It was then maneuvered into place and lowered into the stump with pipes and crowbars. Six large screws were driven through its steel plate to anchor it. Lastly we trowelled a layer of black mortar over the steel plate to protect it from rust and match the color of the weathered stump.

RESULTS:

The result: a sculptured pair of hands that appear to "grow" directly out of the stump.

We chose the direct method over other techniques to familiarize the students with contemporary materials and methods. We wanted them to see, and to participate in, the development of a full-scale project from start to finish.

"Hands" has now become an integral part of the lives of the students at the Oregon State School for the Deaf. Most of the students live on campus and will see it every day as long as they're part of the school. Those who participated will remember their part in helping to build and install it. It is their relationship to the sculpture that makes it important: not what it is, but what it means.

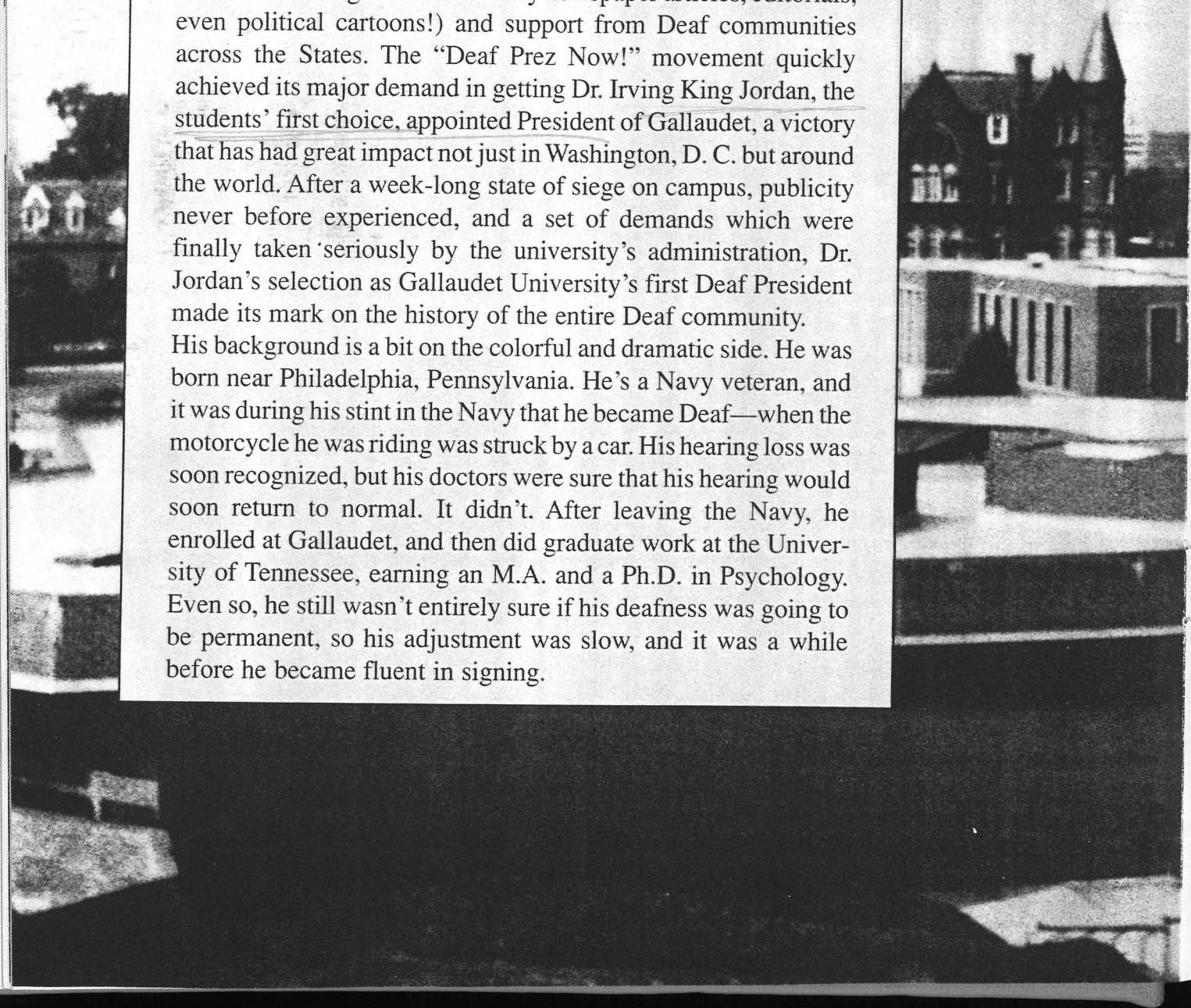
DEAF LIFE

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW:

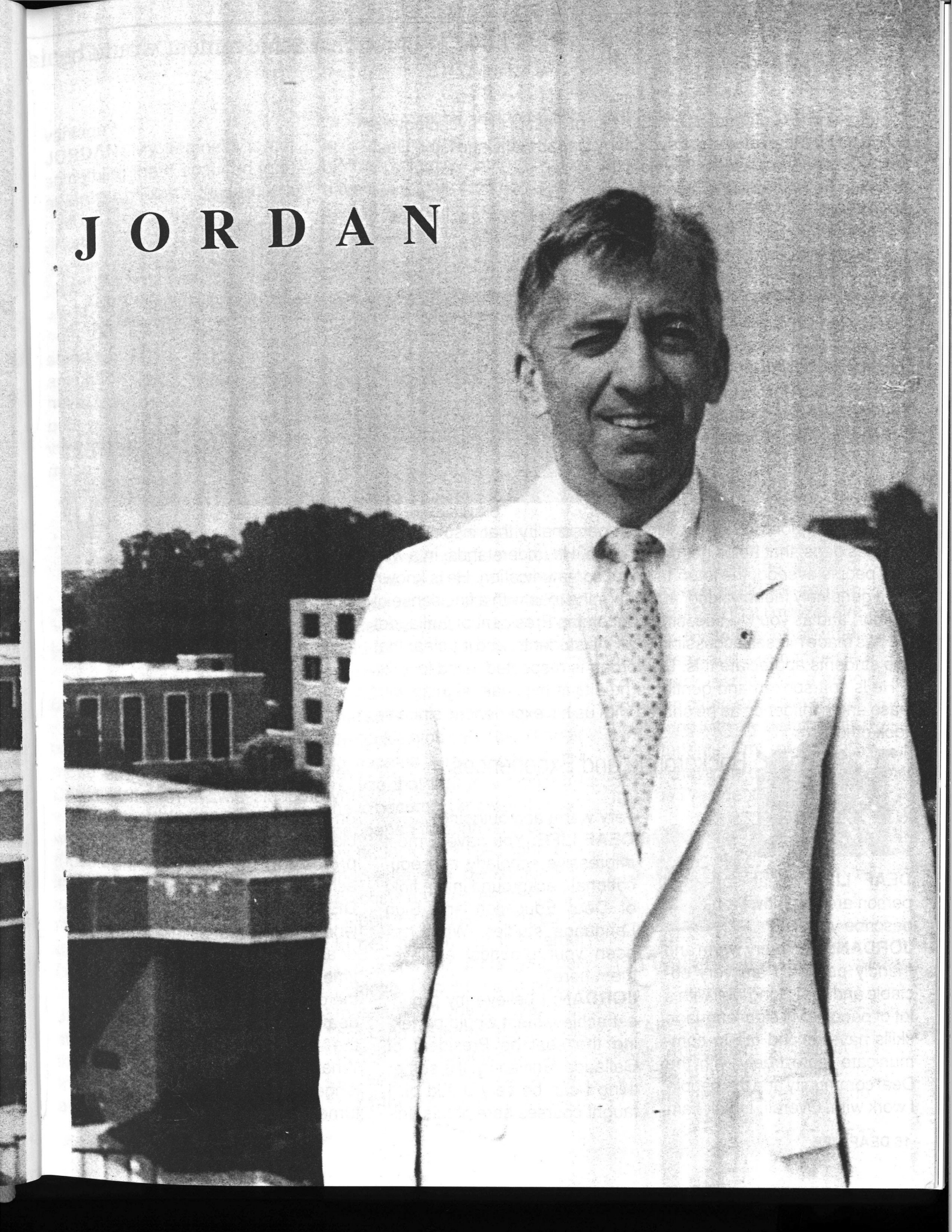
DR. I. KING

March, 1988. History was in the making, and the Deaf community knew it. The "Deaf President Now!" movement started by Gallaudet University students escalated far beyond the campus, attracting prime-time media attention (ABC-TV, NBC-TV, and CBS-TV coverage as well as many newspaper articles, editorials, even political cartoons!) and support from Deaf communities across the States. The "Deaf Prez Now!" movement quickly achieved its major demand in getting Dr. Irving King Jordan, the students' first choice, appointed President of Gallaudet, a victory that has had great impact not just in Washington, D. C. but around the world. After a week-long state of siege on campus, publicity never before experienced, and a set of demands which were finally taken seriously by the university's administration, Dr. Jordan's selection as Gallaudet University's first Deaf President made its mark on the history of the entire Deaf community.

His background is a bit on the colorful and dramatic side. He was born near Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He's a Navy veteran, and it was during his stint in the Navy that he became Deaf—when the motorcycle he was riding was struck by a car. His hearing loss was soon recognized, but his doctors were sure that his hearing would soon return to normal. It didn't. After leaving the Navy, he enrolled at Gallaudet, and then did graduate work at the University of Tennessee, earning an M.A. and a Ph.D. in Psychology. Even so, he still wasn't entirely sure if his deafness was going to be permanent, so his adjustment was slow, and it was a while before he became fluent in signing.

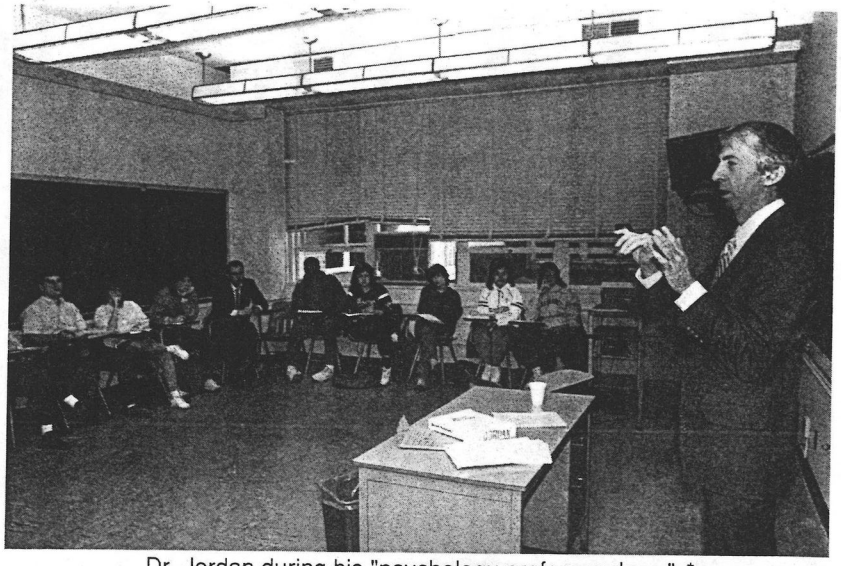


JORDAN



Returning to Gallaudet as an assistant professor in Psychology, he became chairperson of the Psychology Department, and later, Dean of the College of Arts and Science, the position he held until his appointment as President.

By way of scholarly achievements, he has, for example, published many monographs [scholarly articles] on teaching and learning Sign Language, participated in many conferences, and is is actively involved with 2 scholarly publications, **American Annals of the Deaf** and **Sign Language Studies**. His credits and honors make for a long list.



Dr. Jordan during his "psychology professor days." *

But what sort of person is Dr. I. King Jordan? He is, of course, a leader. And a scholar who has had a long, honorable career. But more importantly, perhaps, Dr. Jordan has the kind of personality that inspires, that bridges gaps, that helps get things done. He understands, in a way few people ever do, the importance of communication. He is known as a genuinely friendly, kind, and charming man with a fine sense of humor, and as you will see, since becoming President of Gallaudet he has made himself accessible to all the students, and it's clear that the students appreciate this. Dr. Jordan is respected—and loved.

He is soft-spoken and gentle as he sits in his chair, signing with ease and confidence as he shares with us his experiences since he took office.

Background and Experiences

DEAF LIFE: What sort of a person are you; how would you describe yourself?

JORDAN: I am a very warm and friendly person. I am very sociable and I get along well with a lot of people. My sign language skills have helped me to communicate more freely with the Deaf community and the people I work with. Overall, I think I am very warm and outgoing.

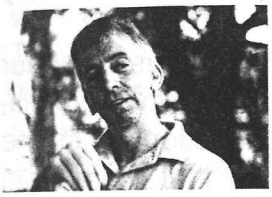
DEAF LIFE: You have a most impressive scholarly and educational background in the field of Deaf Education and Sign Language studies. What has been your proudest achievement here?

JORDAN: I believe my proudest achievement would be taking the seat as President of Gallaudet University. It is something I can be very proud of. I taught courses here at this university before being elected and my students always remarked on the good memories of the classes I taught. My teaching profession is also another achievement I am proud of.

DEAF LIFE: Men and women who become deaf as teenagers or adults tend to have a difficult time adjusting, since they lack the cultural identity of the born-deaf child, yet they're not part of the Hearing world anymore. What have your toughest challenges been? How have you turned your situation to your ad-

vantage?

JORDAN: My deafness is not something that I acquired [got] at birth. I became deaf after a motorcycle accident at the age of twenty. It has helped me to be the link between two worlds; the Deaf world and the Hearing world. I would like to try and help both of these worlds understand each other. I know that I am not "culturally Deaf" and will never be, but I can at least see both worlds from their points of view and try to contribute as much as I can to it.



On the Deaf and Hearing Communities

DEAF LIFE: There is an understandable rift [division] within the Deaf community between those who have a strong native-Deaf cultural identity and those who don't—including those who were born and raised Hearing, those deafened relatively late in life, had Oral upbringings, or somehow don't fit into the mold. How have you overcome prejudice against you from within the Deaf community as well as from the outside?

JORDAN: There is an understandable rift between both of these worlds. I would like to try to help these people to get along. I know that in time these two worlds will be able to relate to each other and become "one big happy family." Both groups have the same common concerns; communication is just one of these. I'd like to emphasize that Gallaudet University's mission is to serve *all* Deaf and Hearing people regardless of their mode of communication.

On Accomplishments

DEAF LIFE: Intentionally or not, you've been pushed into the spotlight, and have achieved the status of Leader and Role Model for thousands of Deaf children in the country. How do you feel about that?

JORDAN: There is a phrase that says "The harder you work, the luckier you get." I didn't seek to become a role model, but I realize that that is something I have become. I know all this has happened through a lot of hard work, luck, and yes, good timing. I have a background in teaching and degrees that have helped me to maintain the ability to get through. So the harder you work, the more you can achieve. I would like to send a message to young Deaf children and tell them: "Not only did I achieve something, but I worked hard to get it. If you work hard there's nothing you can't achieve!"

DEAF LIFE: On a personal level, what would you most like to accomplish?

JORDAN: My goal for Gallaudet is to achieve excellence in all of its programs. Individuals will achieve up to the expectations set. We're not demanding enough. I want to take off the cap and encourage our students to go for the top. I want to convince students, faculty, staff, and the world that Gallaudet is a first-rate university and you get a first-rate education here.

DEAF LIFE: What do you feel has been the secret of your success?

JORDAN: I think the secret of my success could be contributed to the fact that I'm an active listener. I listen to what other people say and I remember it. I'm a quick learner! I'm a good communicator, and I work hard. I get along with my staff, faculty, and students; I'm people-oriented. I have the right personality to be President of Gallaudet.

On Gallaudet

DEAF LIFE: The "Deaf Prez Now!" movement at Gallaudet got lots of publicity, prime-time TV and media coverage, and

provoked a lot of interest, in both the Hearing and Deaf communities. I've heard that there's been an upsurge of enrollments in Sign Language classes, partly as a result of Gallaudet being in the spotlight.

Far left: Paul Kelly, the new Vice-President for Business Services at Gallaudet; center, Joe Fritsch, a trainer in Gallaudet's athletic department; right, Dr. Jordan. *

Deafness has become a "chic" topic. Do you think we've achieved lasting gains?

JORDAN: My lasting impressions are that more Deaf people should go out and educate the Hearing community on deafness. A positive attitude towards deafness is important. The Ambassador to China and his wife approached me and gave me positive remarks on the "Deaf President Now!" campaign. This has been one major step in the Deaf community, to be responsible for educating others. We've achieved a start that will not stop. The people have a little information, and want more.

DEAF LIFE: What do you hope to accomplish as President of Gallaudet University?

JORDAN: As President of Gallaudet University, I hope to accomplish the task of succeeding at Gallaudet first. I know there is a whole world out there watching me and waiting for the success of my presidency. I want to be able to show that we are moving ahead and that we can move forward with ease. I know I can do it and will do a fine job at that. I am ready and up to the tasks at hand and I intend to succeed in the job ahead. I *will* succeed. We are all in this together.

DEAF LIFE: In the few months that you've been acting as the first Deaf president as Gallaudet University, what changes have you made?

JORDAN: In the few months that I have been President of Gallaudet University, I have made myself very accessible to the students, staff, and faculty here. I have gone to classes and talked with the students. I have taken the liberty to go to the students' cafeteria. I have eaten and spoken with them. I have walked around the entire campus and made myself accessible to them. I have also sent out memos to the entire student body to keep them informed of changes or events that they should be aware of. I have made communication open to all, including the people I work with. Overall, I have been very open.

DEAF LIFE: Because of your background, you have a familiarity, a connection with the Hearing world that most Deaf people don't. How do you seek to reconcile the native ASL-Deaf and Oral-Deaf factions in the Gallaudet community? Is there any possibility of bringing them together?

JORDAN: My deafness has made me accessible to communication from both the Hearing and Deaf worlds. I think people should aim for the ability to shift between both worlds and not try to force anyone into one way of communication or the other. Be able to move freely. I am working to build a bridge between these two. I know that my American Sign Language (ASL) skills are not very good. But I have learned to be more receptive to others and I can at least sign fairly well. I feel that we are all in this together and we can help each other to make this work.

On Change and Opportunity

DEAF LIFE: Deaf Americans tend to have 3rd-grade-level English skills. How do you feel about this gloomy fact, and how would you recommend we go about changing it?

JORDAN: Whoever solves this problem solves all the problems. Reading is a most important thing. Everything else is worthless if you cannot read. Take the Teletype devices and the television decoders, for example. They are fine for those of us who can read, but they are worthless for those who don't know how to read at all. Magic answers are needed for this kind of question. I would be famous right now if I knew how to answer it myself. [But I will say:] Bi-lingual education is best. Encourage young Deaf children to sign because students who sign early get that language exposure early. Teach signing, using English-as-a-second-language techniques.

DEAF LIFE: More and more Deaf people are becoming professionals like lawyers and stockbrokers, and participating in sports such as skydiving—and yet newspapers still use the word "deaf-mute." There's continuing under-employment and waste of Deaf talents and abilities. Do you think that old, deep prejudices [narrow-mind] and ignorance [not-informed] can be replaced by real understanding? Where does one start?

JORDAN: I think that a positive understanding between both the Hearing and Deaf worlds would provide us with a positive attitude towards deafness. Parents and the Hearing community [need to] understand the facts of deafness and what they can learn from it. If it means for the Deaf people to go out there and try to better communicate with their Hearing counterparts, then that would be one step gained in the right direction.

DEAF LIFE: What would you say is the biggest challenge facing the Deaf community here?

JORDAN: Opportunity. For so long, we have been denied opportunity. When Hearing people ask what Deaf people want, I say they need a fair shake of opportunity so that they could prove that they could do anything they want. Give us a fair shake and we'll show you we can do *anything* Hearing people can. I like to say that Deaf people can do anything . . . except hear. I don't like the word "disabled" because people tend to look at the "dis" and not the "able". The same applies for the word "can't." I try to take out the "t" in it.

DEAF LIFE: How would you encourage Deaf people to take on more responsibilities as leaders?

JORDAN: I honestly think that the week of the "Deaf Prez Now!" movement has helped to change the eyes of the Deaf community all over the world. We changed the world for Deaf people—it will never be the same. We have all snowballed in leadership capability and have become strong, articulate and very well-organized. I believe in my heart and mind that all Deaf people are just like every Hearing person. We are all the same, except for the fact that we just cannot hear... *Deaf people can do anything . . . except hear.*

We changed the world for Deaf people —it will never be the same

BY LINDA LEVITAN & WILMA R. SANTIAGO

PHOTOS BY JENNIFER BAKER

* PHOTOS COURTESY OF GALLAUDET UNIVERSITY

Note to our Readers:

This article originally appeared in our Trial Issue. We are reprinting it in full for the benefit of those who may not have read it, and to provide a better understanding of the readers' responses which follow it. We'd like to express our thanks to those readers who have shared their opinions with us.

DOES ASL HAVE A PLACE IN EDUCATION FOR THE DEAF?

ASL has been used in the underground for both educational and social purposes. Is it time to bring it into to the open?

While waiting for a downtown bus to arrive, a group of Deaf people converse among themselves. Their hands make motions in the air and their facial expressions add color to their moving hands. Fingers form alphabetical letters as words are spelled out here and there and their bodies move ever so smoothly to the story that unfolds. These are young Deaf people speaking in a unique language—American Sign Language (ASL).

What is ASL ? It is the native language of thousands of Deaf people and is the primary language used by most Deaf adults among themselves. Linguist Ted Supalla describes ASL as a language that is different from English. "It is a true language with consistent rules of grammar, syntax, and word structure. These are what linguists would look at in any communication system." Nearly 500,000 Deaf people and an unknown number of hearing people use ASL regularly, making it the third most widely used non-English language in the United States, following Spanish with 4.5 million people and Italian with 600,000 people.

Supalla, who learned to sign in infancy from his Deaf family, remembers "finding out that ASL was bad" when he first entered deaf school in 1956. Even the Deaf teachers at school "looked down on me whenever I used ASL. They wanted me to use proper signing." These days, that means using signs in English word order. Educators have encouraged the use of invented sign systems, commonly called signed English, in schools as a way of making English visually accessible to Deaf students. These systems use ASL signs, as well as signs that have been initialized using the first letter of the English word they represent, and some signs unique to the systems.

Supalla was shocked to discover that advocates of signed English thought that their signing was better than his. "They only took a few classes while I signed all my life and they tell me my signing is no good."

There's a growing controversy

There is a danger that too much ASL will lock a student into a non-English pattern.

on how people view ASL in the educational process for Deaf children. To give us a better understanding of the issues, **DEAF LIFE** interviewed professionals involved in educating Deaf people.

Victoria (Torrie) Armour, who is hearing, has been teaching Deaf students for several years. Currently a Sign Communication Specialist at the National Technical Institute for the Deaf in Rochester, New York, she has developed courses for Deaf college students who communicate primarily in sign, and who have difficulty with written English. Her work grew out of observations of young Deaf children who would "act out" what they wanted to communicate, or who would sign in ASL, but not know how to say it in English. "It is important to be able to understand the language a child is acting out in order to feed back to the child the appropriate English response he or she needs." Armour feels that flexibility in teaching English is important, and in practice this flexibility can include using ASL to teach English.

George Attleweed is a counselor/advisor for the Ohlone College Hearing Impaired program in Fremont, California, and also served as interim director for the Gallaudet College Regional Center. He has been active in the development of the systems for signing English that are used in schools today. Attleweed believes that English should be taught through "total immersion". Recent workshops on teaching English through ASL, he believes, are misleading. "I have gone to workshops featuring the 'carrot' that ASL would be used to teach English. That is a mistake. [They are] two entirely different languages. We teach Spanish by Spanish only. Total immersion."

If you give a hungry person a fish, that person has food for one day. If you teach that person how to fish, that person will have food for a lifetime. He believes that there is a danger that too much ASL will lock a student into a non-English pattern. The student will understand the teacher, but won't be able to understand English. "It's all right to use ASL to teach concepts," he says, "no argument there." Then those concepts need to be translated back to English through the use of one of the invented systems of signed English.

Edward Scouten, noted educator, historian, and author of *Turning Points in the Education of Deaf People*, feels that it is the teacher's responsibility for the student's acquisition of English, which is the one key to learning almost all other subjects. "Without English, there is little education really possible for prelingually deaf children." Scouten believes that ASL has no place in education because it would negatively influence the educational process. It would steal time away from learning and practicing English. Rather, he states that a prelingually Deaf child should first have twelve to fourteen years of English as a foundation. After such time it would be all right for the prelingually Deaf youth to learn and use ASL.

"If you had asked me ten years ago," chuckles Dennis Berrigan, "I would have told you that English is important, and therefore you must sign in English. Not now." Berrigan is Deaf, and a certified teacher of Deaf children. He currently teaches ASL to Hearing adults in the Sign Language Studies Department at Madonna College in Livonia, Michigan.

His experience as a teacher, along with research on ASL as a language, has convinced him that ASL can be used in the classroom for teaching English as a second language, as well as other subjects. "The concept comes first. How it applies to English can be taught second."

Berrigan's parents and siblings are also Deaf. Growing up in a signing environment, and continuing to work in a signing environment, has led him to believe that English is used as "the language of oppression" of Deaf people by Hearing people. Deaf children, he believes, lose motivation to learn because they can't understand the teachers.

Terry Johnson underscores the need for teachers to understand ASL culture. Johnson feels that accepting ASL's culture is important in being able to have a "positive attitude towards ASL as a language itself." A coordinator for interpreting services at the Rochester Institute of Technology, Johnson states, "A person should be able to communicate to another in the appropriate language the other understands." Part of his job, as an interpreter, is to figure out what that "appropriate language" is. To do that, you have to know both cultures: Hearing and Deaf.

"Ninety-five percent of Hearing teachers of the Deaf don't get involved in the Deaf community," Berrigan guesses. And the other five percent? "Well, they have to prove themselves first before they're accepted. If they actively seek involvement in the Deaf community, people will eventually accept them and be willing to help them learn about Deaf culture."

ASL can be used in the classroom for teaching English as a second language, as well as other subjects. "The concept comes first; how it applies to English can be taught second."

Johnson argues that "anyone who says that ASL doesn't belong in education really needs to go back to school! There should be more Deaf teachers more qualified to teach the language of the Deaf."

Shaking his head and frowning in response to the above comment, Scouten says, "I would say that to master any language —ASL, Spanish, French, etc.—an individual must live with the language to be learned, twenty-four hours a day. It all depends on the English. No language can be learned without the reinforcement of constant usage—practice." He argues that "ASL is a language of concept. However, a concept is nothing if it cannot be received through reading or expressed in writing or speech. This is a reality of the Hearing world of work."

Most Deaf children come to school knowing little, if any, sign from Hearing families who do not sign ASL. It is natural for these families to want their children to understand English. If teachers were to use ASL, wouldn't that disadvantage these children? It's usually the children of Deaf families who help the children from Hearing families, observed Berrigan. This situation "pulls down" the ASL student, retarding that student's progress, Berrigan asserts. "No one really benefits in this situation."

Johnson and Armour both noted that Hearing people learn about ASL from classes they take. They learn about the grammar and structure of sign. Deaf people use ASL, but are not taught about ASL in school.

The educational establishment does not recognize ASL as something worthwhile with which to educate Deaf children. Supalla hunches that although there are probably some teachers who use ASL in classrooms, it is not part of official policy. He thinks that it is because nobody really understands how ASL works. People feel threatened by it.

Even if ASL is to find a place in education, it won't be an easy task to change the system. "Thousands of teachers are already tenured. We can't ask them to leave," says Supalla. "We have to start at graduate schools where future teachers are trained." An additional difficulty with the existing system is that there are not many materials for those teachers who do support the use of ASL in the classroom.

English is used as "the language of oppression" of deaf people by hearing people.

This is clearly a question that opens a Pandora's box of controversy. ASL has been used in the underground for both educational and social purposes. Is it time to bring it into the open? **DEAF LIFE** invites you to respond to this article by writing to the editor. We will publish your responses in a future issue.

BY C. TANE AKAMATSU
WILMA R. SANTIAGO

OUR READERS' RESPONSES

Dear Editor:

I have just finished reading the article regarding the controversy of using ASL in the educational setting. I feel compelled to respond to what was said for the reasons stated.

Both my parents are deaf and I have chosen a career as an interpreter for the deaf. Growing up with the primary language being ASL, I feel very strongly that ASL is not something to be looked down upon. As stated in the article, people feel threatened by it because of no understanding. If time was taken to conduct workshops about ASL for those people interested or involved in sign language, they would realize that ASL is just as much a language of its own as Spanish, French, or German. What people fail to realize is that along with the signs that make up phrases, there is also the facial and body expressions which convey the English translation of what is being said.

As I was growing up using ASL, of course I didn't know that what I was doing was called ASL, I was "speaking" in a very unique way of expressing myself. If the people who are wary of mistrusting of this particular language would just stop and think for a minute, they would realize that everyone, whether hearing or deaf, use some form of ASL in just a mood or feeling. So, how can people who use ASL anyway, in some disregard his/her language just because they are living in a foreign language-speaking country. In the same effect, they are not taught the whos and whats of English in English but rather are explained through Spanish translations of the English language. Therefore, why would we want to prevent deaf people who use ASL from learning basic educational requirements through their own language? Even English-speaking Americans what it takes to explain this complex system that is called English should be taught in a language the person is more readily able to comprehend.

"ASL is not something to be looked down upon . . . . people feel threatened by it because of no understanding."

Cindy A. Heppner
Registered Interpreter for the Deaf
(CSC)

"During my seven years teaching deaf students I have found ASL to be a viable and even preferable language in which to teach. I have used ASL to teach English, Mathematics, Science and, YES, even speech!"

—Mary Altuna

Dear Editor:

At the outset, I wish to make clear that I have been hearing from birth, no one in my family is deaf, English was and is my first language, I am a certified speech therapist, I am a certified teacher of the deaf, and I hold an IC from the National RID. I also profess to be a person with a fair amount of common sense.

During my seven years teaching deaf students I have found ASL to be a viable and even preferable language in which to teach. I have used ASL to teach English, Mathematics, Science and, YES, even speech! If a teacher cannot effectively communicate with his/her students then how can learning possible occur—except haphazardly?

As far back as I can remember, I have read and heard about how deaf people have such a poor command of the English language . . .

Question: How have deaf students been taught?

Answer: Primarily, through the use of the Oral/Aural Approach and/or through the use of some Manually Coded English System.

Question: Were there **any** controlled studies done whereby deaf infants were taught, primarily, though the use of ASL by educators who were competent in both ASL and English?

Answer: **NO.**

Common sense tells me that before ASL can be dismissed as an approach to the education of deaf student of deaf students, some research and facts must be documented.

I urge people to find and support those educators who advocate the use of ASL. I encourage individuals to speak out, through interpreters if necessary, at parent meeting, at teacher training programs, and at various conventions to help promote ASL and dispel some of the fears and misconceptions. Get involved! There are many competent and concerned educators out there, but mostly, they have been standing alone.

Mary Altuna, M.A., I.C.

Dear Editor:

I would like to add my idiomatic two cents to the argument about ASL and English. To begin with, the arguments in support of ASL over English, are precisely the same arguments that were advanced a few years ago in support of Black English over English. Both Black English and ASL identify unique groups of people. In a sense, they are love languages, and by identifying with a language, one also identifies with the culture it represents. I don't have a strong feeling, either for or against Black English or ASL, assuming that the users understand the advantages or limitations thereof. Obviously, both Black English and ASL are exclusionary. They exclude white people and/or most hearing people. This too, has its advantages, but the language of English is the language of power, and regardless of how one feels, to use either ASL or Black English as the principal language, is to be relegated by the English-speaking majority to a lesser position on the hierarchy of power. the better one speaks English, i.e., the better the command of grammar, the more powerful the person. It is as simple as that.

ASL is a beautiful, conceptual language, and I truly believe that it has an important place in the proliferation of a deaf sub-culture, but it has no place in the education process, if deaf citizens ever wish to compete with their hearing counterparts, with any kind of efficiency.

In closing, I am terribly bothered by something I sense in the arguments for both Black English and ASL. When I look at who is supporting these concepts, I find that often they are the most educated of all deaf, or that they are hearing siblings, or hearing children of deaf families. And, I recall that during the height of the arguments over Black English, that the supporters of that concept, were the most educated, best speaking people. When I ask myself why those individuals would use written English to support a language that dispossesses its users, I have to wonder if the subconscious motives of the advocates might actually be to keep their constituents in a state of impoverished language.

Philip A. Bellefleur, Ph.D.
Superintendent, Virginia School for the Deaf and Blind at Hampton

Dear Editor:

Imagine yourself in a foreign country, such as Germany. The natives expect you to understand them as they speak to you. There are signs on every street corner, in every store. Everywhere there are written words; you recognize the letters, but the words don't make sense. You feel lost and confused, and there is no one with whom you might consult. There is no teacher, no parent, no interpreter.

Such is the plight of the deaf person knowing only ASL, who is trying to cope with the hearing world. Verbal, non-verbal, and written language are useless; there is no communication. The failure to communicate began in the Educational System.

Most deaf students do not have a good understanding of English. Their hearing teachers are only superficially familiar with ASL; they don't truly reach the deaf student. The teacher is often regarded as an "idiot". So the deaf student doesn't learn English; doesn't comprehend any subject which is based on English, for example, communicating with the hearing world. Therefore, the deaf student retreats to the deaf world, isolating himself from the hearing world, from total communication, from developing his abilities, from becoming educated.

ASL communication skills are taught to the deaf by other deaf people. ASL is **the** language of the deaf. It's fast and effective in communicating concepts; the ideal language for common conversation. But few of us make a living by using only our highly-developed conversation skills. Too many deaf people hold low-paying, unchallenging jobs which are well below their capabilities. Why? Lack of education.

Educators are charged with teaching our children to learn. Learning promotes the acquisition of survival skills. The foundation is the English Language; all other subjects follow.

The solution comes in two parts: First, educators must be **required** to thoroughly understand ASL. In using ASL, the teacher can communicate with the deaf in their own language; the educator transforms from "idiot" into Teacher.

Second, use ASL to teach English. Stress the importance of knowing **both** languages. Teach the concept that (written) English is the key, rather than the barrier, to the other subjects which must be learned in order to survive and grow, both personally and professionally.

Both languages are tools. Let's use them both.

Joseph Latona
Reno, Nevada

"ASL is a beautiful, conceptual language, and I truly believe that it has an important place in the proliferation of a deaf subculture, but it has no place in the education process, if deaf citizens ever wish to compete with their hearing counterparts, with any kind of efficiency."

—Philip A. Bellefleur, Ph.D.

Dear Editor:

I really enjoyed reading your new magazine —**DEAF LIFE**. While reading "Does ASL have a place in Education for the Deaf?", I am deaf myself since birth but I have never understand ASL. Perhaps because I came from Vienna, Austria in 1940 and I had never used ASL since. I have never understood ASL on the stages which frustrated me.

My son once told me that ASL is a language for the Deaf—but I have to say he is wrong to my point of view. I always use PSE—Pidgin Signed English. I had learned English very well in spite of my deaf family. I feel that children should learn English before using ASL. They'd be lost in the future in the hearing world. I'd like your opinion.

Nelly Myers

"ASL communication skills are taught to the deaf by other deaf people. ASL is the language of the deaf. It's fast and effective in communicating concepts; the ideal language for common conversation."

—Joseph Latona

20

SILENT NEWS

TWENTIETH ANNIVERSARY

Silent News represents a very American kind of success story—that of the independent, small-scale "basement venture." The newspaper *was* actually started in the Wiggins family's basement. Julius Wiggins was a master furrier who had worked many years in his family's trade. Foreseeing a decline in the business, he decided to start the first national newspaper for the Deaf—something that didn't exist. There was a monthly magazine, *The Deaf American*, published by the National Association of the Deaf (NAD), but Wiggins wanted to publish an independent newspaper, something which could be tucked under one's arm, read at the bus-stop, rolled up and stashed in a pocket. Most publications aimed at a Deaf readership are published by a staff of trained Hearing professionals. But **Silent News**, from the start, has been a grass-roots Deaf publication. (For many years, Wiggins' son Morton was the only Hearing person on the staff.) **Silent News** can honestly claim to be of, by, and for Deaf people.

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THE SILENT PRESS, INC.
NEW YORK, NEW YORK

Seasons Greetings and All the Best for 1969

SILENT NEWS
★ WHERE ★ WHAT ★ WHEN ★

VOL. 1, NO. 1. JANUARY 1, 1969 COPY 15 cents

SILENT NEWS IS BORN

Our Newspaper Welcomes You

The Silent News came into existence because of the deaf's demanding need of a newspaper as such. The Silent News is put together by a few deaf people who saw the need for a deaf newspaper.

The first edition of this news paper will be distributed to deaf clubs. They will then circulate among the club members. If any more wish to order a copy, they may do so by filling out the enclosed card and mail it to the Silent News. The copy will be mailed to subscribers every two weeks. Silent News will print news on sports, social events, metropolitan news, and a Dear Mrs. Deaf column (for your problems).

If you have any news or advertisement which you would like published mail it into us. If you're afraid of your grammar, you need not necessarily have to be afraid. We will correct them for you.

Also if you have any pictures or something of that nature which you want published, mail it to Silent Press, Incorporated, 450 Seventh Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10001

Sports Editor Will Write News About Sports

The Silent News is in demand for a sports writer or editor to write a column about sports. If you are the person who can lend qualified for this position or can recommend the person who can qualify for it, have him write to the Silent News. He must be interested in the deaf's affairs and willing to cooperate with them. Silent Press, Inc., 450 Seventh Ave., New York, N.Y. 10001

The Editor and Staff Will Have Plans for News about Social Events

The Editor and Staff will have plans for news about Social Events.

For any clubs or groups which want their big event publicized, we will be glad to do it.

We plan to cover all important activities.

Bilingual Santa Knows Sign Talk Of Deaf Children

OMAHA (AP)—Some children are getting their first chance to tell their Christmas desires to Santa Claus.

Melvin Miller, 19, a toy department clerk, is substituting as

(Continued on page 3)

Deaf to Visit the 1969 Olympic Games in Yugoslavia.

Many deaf from east to west have made plans to visit Belgrade, Yugoslavia in August, 1969. The trip to other European countries and back will start after the Games are completed.

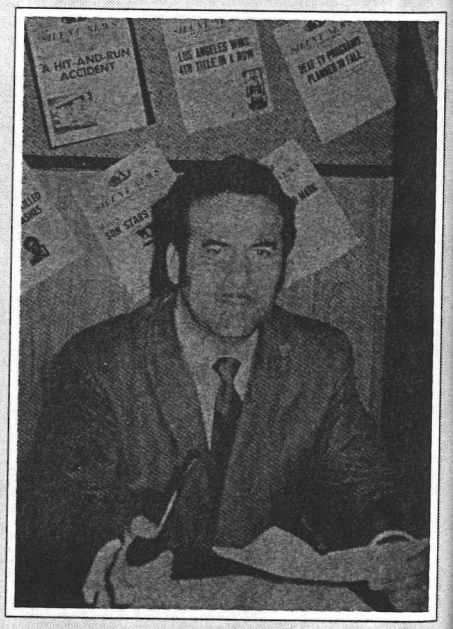
★★★★ SEE EDITORIAL PAGE ABOUT NEW NEWSPAPER FOR DEAF

Front page, the first issue of ***Silent News****, January 1, 1969.*

The **Silent News** story begins in the summer of 1968, when Julius Wiggins, his wife Harriet, and their 3 children drove West, stopping in Las Vegas for 3 days to visit Harriet's cousin. One afternoon, while taking a stroll, Wiggins passed a sidewalk "hawker" who was giving away free sample copies of a Las Vegas entertainment-and-events newspaper, **Where? What? When?** He took a copy and brought it back with him. Something clicked in his mind, he recalls. "I looked through this newspaper; I was impressed. I showed it to Harriet, and told her, 'I have a dream—I want to set up a newspaper for the Deaf.'"

At that time, Wiggins was still operating an independent fur business, "Mink by Julie." Although Wiggins was a highly skilled professional who had achieved some notable successes, and his family was fairly comfortable, he had been giving some thought to leaving the business and finding another trade. "It was a hard business; fur coats were selling very slowly. It was hard to find customers."

Some years previously, Julius Wiggins had started his autobiography, **No Sound.** Anxious to publish it, he had invited his friends to become shareholders in the book's profits. But it had been lying around in rough-draft form, unpublished, for some time. "I had difficulties with the proofing—



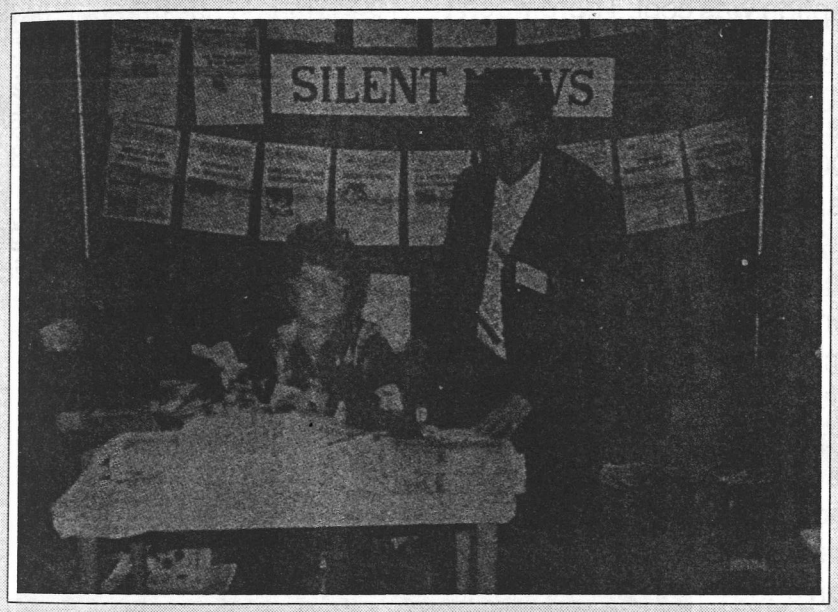
Julius Wiggins at the start of his publishing career.

COURTESY OF SILENT NEWS

WHAT WHEN

20

the grammar needed improvement, this, that—I kept postponing it and postponing it." When he returned home from that trip West, he invited his shareholders to come over and discuss the idea of starting a Deaf newspaper. The book was obviously not going to be ready for publication soon. "So I asked them: 'Why not start the newspaper now? The newspaper instead of the book?' I wanted to start running the business now. . . . I decided to call the newspaper **Silent News**." He then went to a lawyer to start the incorporation process; he named his new venture "Silent Press."



COURTESY OF SILENT NEWS

Julius and Harriet Wiggins at a 1979 convention.

It's one thing to dream about starting a newspaper from scratch, even sharing the idea with friends and selling them stock in it, but it's another thing entirely to get it off the ground. "It was very tough getting started!" says Harriet. The biggest challenge, as might be expected, was attracting interest, and support, from other Deaf people. A newspaper is a surprisingly expensive thing to print. Unable to raise enough capital to finance printing costs, Julius postponed publication of **Silent News**, and because his stockholders were getting jittery about this risky venture, he called them together once more and returned their money. The only shareholders left were Julius and Harriet Wiggins themselves. Julius then approached a printer and explained that while he didn't have enough money for printing costs, he was willing to barter in furs. The printer was delighted, and they struck a deal: Julius would make a fur coat for the printer's wife in exchange for the printing of the first issues of **Silent News**. The first 6 years were full of frustration, the Wigginses trying to scrape together enough money to keep **Silent News** alive. Finally, the New York League for the Hard of Hearing advised Wiggins to change from a for-profit to a non-profit corporation and line up a grant from a foundation. It proved good advice. "I bought a book listing all the foundations. Our daughter helped write a proposal; we made copies and sent them out all over—all over!

A few foundations helped—$50, $100. One person in New Jersey who had Deaf relatives had been very impressed with the idea of having a newspaper for the Deaf, sent a letter inviting us to New Jersey, met us, and gave us $20,000. That was, well, a *big* help!" It guaranteed survival of the newspaper. "And after that, things became much smoother."

1968

"I told Harriet, 'I have a dream - I want to set up a newspaper for the Deaf.'"
—Julius Wiggins

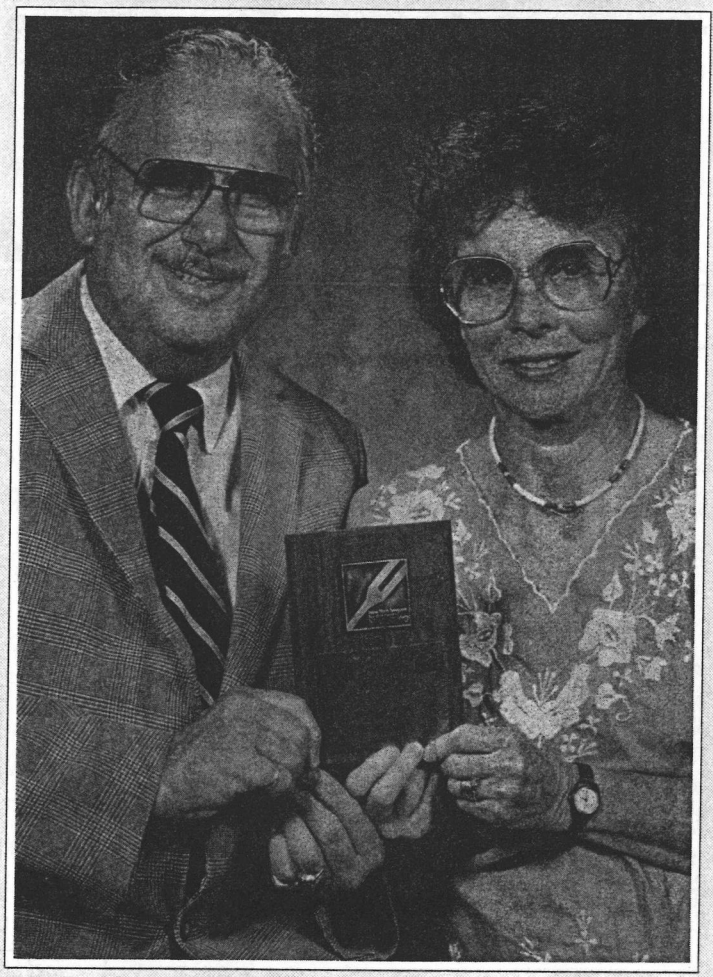
What's the most popular part o
"The headline story, the letter

For its first 9 or so years, **Silent News** was put together in the basement of their house in Fair Lawn, New Jersey. The whole family participated. Harriet learned how to use a Varityper typesetting machine. (The Varityper was ultimately stolen and replaced by a Compugraphic.) The children handled telephone calls. The eldest did the layout and paste-up. Initial reception was cool. There wasn't a lot of feedback from the Deaf community, but the Wiggins family plunged bravely onwards.

Bit by bit, subscriptions to **Silent News** came in, and today, the newspaper claims to have some 72,000 readers in all, across the U.S. and Canada, and South America, and abroad in England, Israel, Japan, West Germany, France, Australia, and Norway.

Silent News has continued to evolve and improve its content and format. Early issues of the newspaper were, Harriet confesses, "pretty much a jumble. . . the first few years were very confusing." Some 4 years ago, contributor Gregg Brooks suggested that the Wigginses go to New York City and meet with Ann Silver. She had studied the newspaper and found it so "awful" that she decided to work with them and give the format a much-needed radical beefing-up. Thanks to her, the present format of **Silent News** is clean and organized, much more smooth-looking; the earlier jumble has disappeared.

What's the most popular part of **Silent News**? Harriet counts off 4 things: "The headline story, the letters from readers, sports, and national news." The least popular feature? "Community news." Readers have indicated that they consider the lists of capsule movie and video reviews "too long." And that they would like "more sports coverage." Harriet adds: "Many people on the West Coast thought we were ignoring them. That's not true—it depends on the information [press releases and articles] we receive." In general, though, she says, "most readers like the newspaper, and want us to keep working at it." Readership is now estimated to be 80% Deaf, 20% Hearing. But the primary focus has not changed: **Silent News** is for the American



With an award presented by New York League for the Hard of Hearing.

"We hope to have a big celebration on our 25th anniversary."
—Harriet Wiggins

...*Silent News*? Harriet counts off 4 things: ...from readers, sports, and national news."

Deaf community.

Asked if they've noticed any significant changes in the Deaf community during the 20 years they've been publishing, Julius and Harriet Wiggins mention steady advances in technology: "Closed-captioned TV programming and videotapes, and more TDD's." Although they feel that there are still prevalent misconceptions about deafness, the Hearing world's understanding of the Deaf world has definitely increased. And it's obvious that both Deaf and Hearing citizens are hungry for more and better coverage. Julius recalls that "when we had a special edition about the new Gallaudet University president, we took a batch of copies to Gallaudet—zoom, they all sold out!"

What are the Wigginses' future plans for **Silent News**? Julius says that they hope to "add more features, more independent reporting and opinions—get more voices. We welcome any ideas, any feedback from our readers." Harriet adds that they'd ultimately like to have full-color pictures. She smiles in anticipation. "We hope to have a big celebration on our 25th anniversary."

BY LINDA LEVITAN
MATTHEW S. MOORE
PHOTO BY MARIE JANOSKO

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Improve Your Foreign Language: ENGLISH

Have a question about English? Write to: "English," c/o DEAF LIFE Magazine.

Questions about English

Q: When is the right time to use **faster** or **more faster**?

ASL (Wrong)
She-Run-More-Faster-Than-Him.

English (Wrong)
She runs **more** fast**er** than him.

English (Correct)
She runs fast**er** than him.

ASL (Correct)
She-Run-More-Fast-Than-Him.

Why?

Because **-er** already means **more**, so you don't have to say more.

Word Building

Vague

Meaning: **not clear**

(Adj., pronounced **Veig**)

(This is an adjective→It describes a noun)

EX: **vague answer** .....(confusing answer—not clear)
vague directions .....(bad directions—not clear)
vague description .....("muddy" description—not clear)
vague idea .....("gray" idea—not clear, not black-and-white)

Examples:

ENGLISH

The student didn't understand the **vague** answer.
We got lost. The directions were **vague**.

ASL

Meeting-**Vague** *(I didn't understand what happened at the meeting—not clear).*
Teacher-Talk-**Vague**-Understand-Nothing *(The teacher was not clear. I didn't understand).*

Source: Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English

BY MATTHEW S. MOORE & LARRY K. QUINSLAND

READERS' VIEWPOINT

Q: Do you think that a Deaf performer like Marlee Matlin should speak (with her voice) in public?

A: 44% Yes 36% No 20% Not Sure

YES—Stereotyping of the deaf needs to be opposed at every opportunity! We get too much rejection and denigration everywhere and must demonstrate that we can learn to talk, speechread, and qualify in a trade or profession.

NO—because that would make other hearing people think that all deaf people can speak like Marlee...it would hurt many deaf people.

NOT SURE—She didn't explain why she made the choice. I will remain neutral until I know her reason.

YES—Everyone should be recognized as an individual. Should the Deaf community be recognized as one that frowns on individuality?

NO—It is a shame that she didn't give us the Deaf a full support—my boss—now wants me to talk like her—Darn her—I can't talk like her!

YES—IF it's done with sign language, so that s.l. is seen as a positive part of a person's communication system, not something to be rejected.

NO—A missed opportunity for the beauty of ASL to be seen.

NOT SURE—I do understand why she did it. She wants more acting jobs & she had to proof herself that she is capable of "communicating" their way.

For next month:

Q: Do you think that all the publicity surrounding the Gallaudet protest has helped the Deaf community?

A: ❑ Yes ❑ No ❑ Not Sure

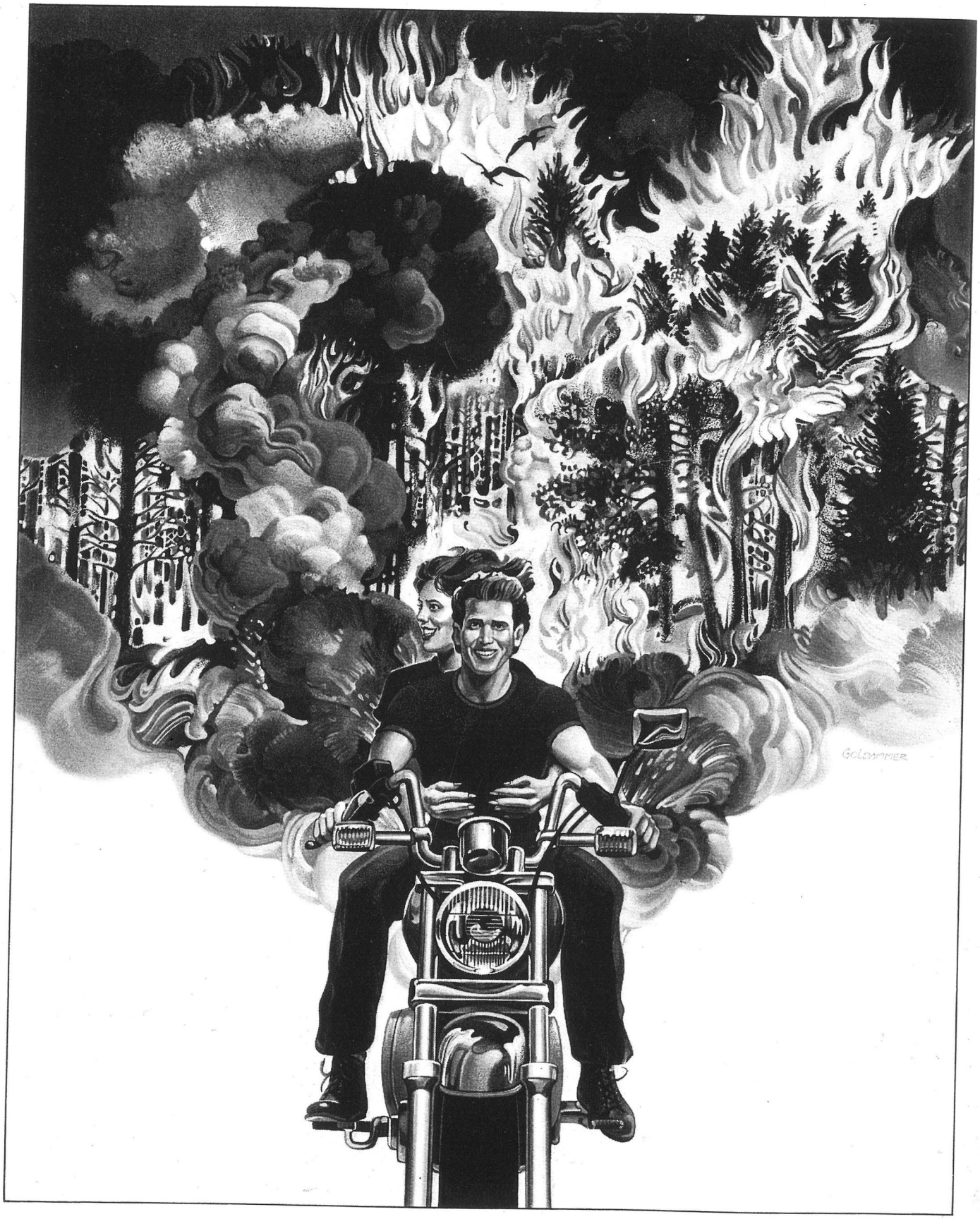
COMMENTS: _____

_____

_____

_____

If you have any questions you'd like to submit, please send them to:
Readers' Viewpoint, **DEAF LIFE Magazine**, Box 63083, Marketplace Mall, Rochester, N.Y. 14623-6383



Don't burn more than rubber.

It only takes one spark to become hell on wheels. So put a spark arrestor on your bike. Remember, only you can prevent forest fires.

SMOKEY

Ad Council

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